

REMARKS:

Status of claims and amendments

Claims 1-11 are pending in the application. Claims 4, 5, 7, and 11 have been withdrawn. In the Office Action dated December 13, 2006, the Examiner:

1. rejected claims 1-3 and 8-10 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Mitsuaki; and
2. rejected claim 6 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mitsuaki in view of Kawada et al.

These rejections are respectfully traversed in light of the instant amendments.

In this amendment, independent claims 1 and 8 have been amended to recite that the guide hole is disposed along an axial direction of the rear strut assembly, and that the rear strut assembly comprises a boss, protruding in the axial direction from an end of the rear strut assembly, the boss being configured to be mounted in the guide hole. No new matter is added; see at least Figure 4.

Amended claims 1 and 8

The Examiner referred to Mitsuaki as disclosing "the rear strut assembly 5 is mounted in the guide hole 59a, 59b." However, Mitsuaki's upper part 5a of element 5 is merely inserted into element 25, where it is secured with bolt 69 and nut 58 (see Figures 1 and 2). The alleged guide hole 59a, 59b is not disposed along an axial direction of the shock absorber 5, nor is a boss of the shock absorber 5 mounted in the alleged guide hole 59a, 59b.

In contrast, the present invention includes an axial boss/guide hole combination, which, in some exemplary embodiments, provides a reference point to mount the rear strut assembly (see Figure 4). The inventive mounting structure is thus more easily assembled than that of Mitsuaki, which can be clearly seen when comparing Figure 4 of the instant application with Figure 1 of Mitsuaki.

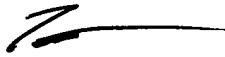
Mitsuaki does not disclose or suggest "a guide hole disposed along an axial direction of the rear strut assembly...wherein the rear strut assembly comprises a boss, protruding in the axial direction from an end of the rear strut assembly, the boss being configured to be mounted in the guide hole." Inventive claims 1 and 8, as well as their dependents, claims 2-7 and 9-11, are thus patentable over Mitsuaki.

Conclusions

In view of the foregoing, Applicant believes all claims now pending in this application are in condition for allowance. The issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

Authorization is granted to charge any outstanding fees due at this time for the continued prosecution of this matter, or credit any overpayment, to Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP Deposit Account No. 50-0310 (matter no. 060945-0119).

Respectfully submitted,



March 5, 2007

Jessica C. Stahnke (Reg. No. 57,570)

Date

for Thomas D. Kohler (Reg. No. 32,797)

MORGAN, LEWIS & BOCKIUS LLP

One Market, Spear Street Tower

San Francisco, CA 94105

415.442.1603